

CONNECTICUT SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION, INC.

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To: Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee
From: Rhea Paul, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, President, Conn. Speech-Language-Hearing Association
RE: Raised Bill #1105, An Act Concerning Special Education

I am writing as President of the CT Speech Language and Hearing Association (CSHA), the professional organization of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) who work in the public schools and serve as faculty the two training institutions in CT. CSHA wishes to express its support for the language seeking to clarify who is eligible to provide applied behavior analysis (ABA) services in the schools. We are gratified that this legislation has included our discipline in this group.

SLPs use instructional methods that draw on principles of behavior analysis with students who show a variety of delays and disorders of language learning, which include as intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, autism and various genetic disorders. These techniques are used to teach speech, language, reading and social communication skills in the classroom (co-teaching with regular and special education teachers) as well as other school and home environments.

ABA methods used by SLPs include task analyses of skills our clients need to learn, the application of prompt and cueing hierarchies, shaping methods, and the use of various kinds of reinforcement, from edibles to social praise. Our discipline plays a critical role in the remediation of severe behavioral problems, by conducting functional assessments and analyzing the communicative intent of the problem behavior. SLPs then teach alternate functional communication to replace the maladaptive behaviors.

SLPs work collaboratively with BCBAs in private, public, and early intervention settings, and some individuals within our field maintain BOTH credentials.

CSHA would like to offer a technical language suggestion to the proposed legislation. Where the term *speech therapist* appears in the bill's language, we would like to point out that we hold a Master's degree and are trained and licensed to diagnose communication disorders, whereas 'therapists' do not diagnose, and work with only a Bachelor's degree. We respectfully request that the title *Speech-Language Pathologist* (SLP), the official title of our profession and the one used in our national certification, be used when referring our discipline in your legislative documents.

We are also concerned about the proposal to eliminate the requirement that parental consent be secured when a planning and placement team recommends a private school placement for a child eligible for special education, and we respectfully request that the committee share the intent behind this language.

All of us at CSHA wish to thank the committee members for your hard work and commitment to Connecticut's children with disabilities and their families, and we thank you for acknowledging the work of SLPs in Connecticut's schools.

Respectfully submitted,



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